

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 /025 W

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P R 131604Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO COMLANTAREA COGARD NY PRIORITY

COMCOGARD WASHDC

INFO USINFO WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 0976

SECDEF WASHDC/OASDPA

UNCLAS OSLO 0204

USIAC

E.O.11652: N/A

SUBJ: MEDIA COVERAGE AMBER ROLL BERGE ISTRA SEARCH

NORWEGIAN MEDIA HAS GIVEN HEAVY PLAY AMVER AND
GENERAL US ROLE BERGE ISTRA SEARCH IN WESTERN
PACIFIC. AMVER ROLE PARTICULARLY WELL COVERED
FIRST DAYS OF SEARCH. PAPERS CARRIED PROFILES
AMBER, AND NORWEGIAN RADIO-TV AIRED FAVORABLE
COMMENTARIES AMVER'S SIGNIFICANCE. STORIES
DETAILED
HOW AMVER ORGANIZED AND STRESSED THAT U.S. PAYS
BILLS FOR RESCUE OPERATIONS.
SINCE BERGE ISTRA HAD BEEN REGULAR AMVER PARTICIPANT
MEDIA GAVE HEAVY PLAY TO FACT THAT NO
POSITIONS REPORTED BY SHIP DURING THIS TRIP,
WHICH CONSIDERED VERY UNUSUAL. ON NATIONAL
TV, REPRESENTATIVE OF SHIPOWNER SAID AMVER
UNFORTUNATELY NOT SO AUTOMATIC THAT ABSENCE
POSITION REPORTS WOULD TRIGGER ALARM. WHEN
QUERIED WHY SUCH AUTOMATIC SYSTEM DOES NOT ES-
IST, HE SAID SOME NATIONS, FOR MILITARY REASONS,
DO NOT WANT THEIR SHIPS INCLUDED IN WORLDWIDE
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PLOTTING.

IN ANOTHER TV PROGRAM,ROGALAND RADIO REP
SAID STUDIES UNDERWAY TOWARD SYSTEM REQUIRING
NORWEGIAN SHIPS REPORT POSITION REGULARLY TO
DATA CENTER.

SOME PAPERS POINTED OUT BERGE ISTRA CAPTAIN
PARTICIPATED AMVER FOR YEARS, AND THAT FOUR
YEARS AGO HE RECEIVED AMVER GOLD MEDAL FOR
HELPING RESCUE JAPANESE SAILORS.

ON JAN 8, A DIRECTOR BERGESON SHIPPING LINE
SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE AMVER'S ASSERTION IT
HAD NOT RECEIVED POSITION REPORTS DURING TRIP.
ON JAN 9, THIS COMMENT COUNTERED BY AFTENPOSTEN
WHICH CARRIED STATEMENT BY LT FRANKLIN FOWLER
AT GOVERNOR ISLAND THAT NO REPORTS SENT SINCE
NOV 12, THAT AMVER ENTIRELY DEPENDENT VOLUN-
TARY PARTICIPATION, AND THAT SHIP AFTER COM-
PLETING TRIP IS NOT PUT BACK INTO COMPUTER
UNTIL SUBMITTING NEW SAILING DATA. SUCH DATA
NOT RECEIVED FROM BERGE ISTRA,FOWLER SAYS.

COMMENT: THOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN THESE FEW COMMENTS
CRITICAL OF AMVER,THEY HAVE BEEN TREATED IN
LOW-KEY OBJECTIVE FASHION. OVERALL,MEDIA PLAY
HAS BEEN DECIDEDLY FAVORABLE AND ONCE AGAIN
HAS BROUGHT RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL TOWARD
AMVER AND US COAST GUARD TO SURFACE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RESCUE OPERATIONS, RESCUE SHIPS, BERGE ISTRA, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976OSLO00204
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760013-0381
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760162/aaaacdff.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUN 2004 by barnescd>; APPROVED <06 DEC 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA COVERAGE AMBER ROLL BERGE ISTRA SEARCH NORWEGIAN MEDIA HAS GIVEN HEAVY PLAY AMVER AND
TAGS: ETRN, AMVER, AUTOMATED MUTUAL-ASST VESSEL RESCUE
To: COMLANTAREA COGARD NY PRIORITY
COMCOGARD WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006